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24 June 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Some Political Implications for the USSR of International Armaments Inspection

PROBLEM

To estimate whether the Soviet rulers can permit international inspectors of armament facilities and installations to have free access within the USSR and at the same time can maintain their present degree of control over their people, and whether the rulers of the Soviet Union would believe that they could do so.

ESTIMATE

1. We must assume that any international armaments inspection system acceptable to the US would require of the USSR major changes in its internal security practices. There would have to be substantial numbers of inspectors, free to travel about the country as necessary within the agreed scope of their duties, to conduct physical inspections of plants and military installations, to communicate abroad without interference, and perhaps to audit certain records of government ministries and production enterprises. These inspectors would presumably

- Notes: (1) This paper has not been coordinated with the IAC agencies.
- (2) This is interim and partial coverage of one of the questions raised by Mr. Stassen which will be covered in NIE 11-11-55: Some Implications for the USSR of a System of International Armaments Inspection, scheduled for IAC action on 30 August.

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not have a right to information other than that related to armaments, but in view of the high degree of integration and great complexity of modern industry their operations would almost certainly impinge upon a large part of industrial activity. They could not help but gain much information beyond the strict scope of their mission. In short, the inspectors would constitute a considerable body of foreign personnel, exempt in many important respects from the control of the Soviet state. Their freedom would be much greater than that of the diplomatic corps in the USSR and would be without precedent in that country.

2. The impact of such a system upon the population and official personnel would not necessarily be so direct and so constant as these broad rights of movement and inspection might suggest. It may fairly be assumed that some sort of pre-arrangement with the Soviet government would have to be made on almost all occasions when actual physical inspection was undertaken, and guide facilities could be arranged to insulate citizens from direct contact with the inspection agents. While the presence of inspection teams within the country would be evident to the population, inspectors would probably not have occasion to establish personal relationships with ordinary citizens, and might not even be able to converse with officials except in the presence of police "liaison" officers.

3. Nevertheless, the knowledge that an international inspection system was in operation and evidence of it would have an influence upon the population. In the case of the USSR, this would have psychological implications bearing directly upon interpretations of the outside world which the Soviet government has heretofore presented to its people. Obviously, it would be difficult to maintain the proposition that the USSR confronted a hostile capitalist encirclement if the capitalist representatives were, by Soviet government consent, admitted to the most important secrets of the Soviet military establishment. The purported dangers of hostile foreign penetration would almost certainly tend to diminish in the eyes of the Soviet people.

4. It might be argued that the implications of an inspection system for the Soviet people would affect so profoundly their relationship to the regime that the latter could no longer maintain its present degree of controls. This argument would probably be presented somewhat along the

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following lines. The USSR as it is understood by its rulers and as it has been presented to the Soviet people is essentially a society under siege. The Soviet state and all its organs have developed in response to this assumed condition, and the controls which it exercises, and the exactions it imposes on its people are by that fact justified. The Soviet people have been so long conditioned to this view of the outside world as hostile that they probably accept it in large part and are therefore willing, in some degree at least, to accept the rigors and discipline which it involves. According to such an argument, the acceptance of international inspection would demonstrate the falsity of this picture and might therefore undermine the willingness of the people to tolerate the present degree of controls.

5. We think there is some measure of truth in this argument and that the consequences of a radical change in the psychological climate of a totalitarian state cannot be clearly foreseen. We think that international inspection would probably in fact result in some loosening of controls as this argument foresees, but we think that such a result would stem from changes in Soviet military security requirements which would flow from the improved international climate. The Soviet government exercises different kinds of controls over its people. Those more directly concerned with military security would be greatly affected by international inspection, and many of the security precautions presently enforced to protect military information would become obsolete. Political controls, however, essential to maintain the authority of the regime, would not necessarily be affected.

6. The internal political authority of the Soviet regime does not, in our view, rest to an appreciable degree upon the willingness of the people to accept the propaganda with which the regime justifies its policies. The docility of the Soviet people toward their government rests on many factors of which national loyalty, self-interest, education, and social inertia are probably predominant. On the other hand, the ability of the regime to insure ready compliance with its orders rests on its ability to manipulate these factors and at the same time to bring the police power to bear where and when needed. We think that none of these factors would be seriously affected by Soviet acceptance of international inspection or by the presence of foreign inspectors in the USSR. Indeed,

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the relief from the fear of war which international inspection would bring to the Soviet people might well strengthen their loyalty to their government and consolidate its hold. Most importantly, the regime's material instruments of control and its police power would not be affected by the mere physical presence of foreign inspectors in the USSR.

7. Reports from defectors and political observers reveal a wide variety of political attitudes in the USSR, ranging from ignorance and apathy at one extreme to rare examples of fervent dedication at the other. In general, they convey the impression that what opposition to the regime exists is passive and apathetic; idealistic dedication is reserved to a few; for those people who tend to object, the regime's sheer unchallengeability and the absence of any plausible alternative renders the Soviet system acceptable.

8. The active political forces in the USSR are limited to a relatively small group. This group includes members of the government and party bureaucracies and possibly the higher levels of the officer corps. While the interests of the members of this group are divergent in many respects, they all converge on the desirability of preserving conditions of stability in order that the status of each can be maintained and consolidated. As in the population at large, the levels of ideological orthodoxy among officials probably vary widely, from frank cynicism even to fanaticism. To a higher degree than the general population, however, they are attuned to the policy implications of changes in the official ideological line and, indeed, their very success in achieving the status which they now enjoy is in some degree a measure of their ability and willingness to bend with the shifting winds of doctrine. Both by reason of their vested interests, therefore, and their ideological sophistication, the elite members of Soviet society are probably more amenable to government direction than the population at large.

9. On the basis of the foregoing analysis of political attitudes in the USSR, it is difficult to see how international inspection would present insurmountable political control problems to the Soviet leaders. At the worst, from their point of view, it would demonstrate to the people once again that deals could be made with the capitalist world and that the threat of war was not imminent. Propaganda problems would be

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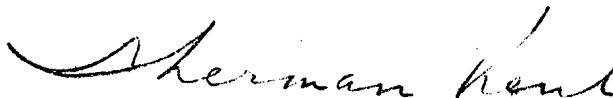
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raised, but would be manageable. It could be shown that Marxism-Leninism had never clearly predicted an armed showdown with the Western camp, and that history had reached a stage in which the struggle of the two camps would be transferred to the political and economic area. At best, a disarmament agreement might strengthen the regime, by encouraging all those with a stake in society to look forward with more confidence to the future.

10. The foregoing considerations lead us to conclude that there are no impediments organic to the Soviet system which would prevent the Soviet leaders from accepting international inspection if they wished to do so. We believe that the Soviet leaders themselves would probably reach this same conclusion, although it would be difficult for them to make the psychological adjustments necessary actually to accept the broad powers of inspection described in paragraph 1. In any event, their decision would depend primarily upon considerations other than those discussed above.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
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